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# Examining The Relationship Of Demographic Variables, Media Exposure, And Motivation On Second Language Acquisition

Heidi Hines

Fort Hays State University, [hjhines@mail.fhsu.edu](mailto:hjhines@mail.fhsu.edu)

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EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES,  
MEDIA EXPOSURE, AND MOTIVATION ON  
SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

being

A Field Study Presented to the Graduate Faculty  
of the Fort Hays State University in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Education Specialist

by

Heidi Hines

M.S., Fort Hays State University

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Approved\_\_\_\_\_

Major Professor

Approved\_\_\_\_\_

Chair, Graduate Council

## ABSTRACT

Many students in higher education settings struggle with learning a new language. It's not uncommon for international students to need additional resources in learning to speak and write in English. A pilot study funded by Fort Hays State University implemented various English software programs, such as Rosetta Stone, and Memrise at one of their Chinese partnership universities. The English programs were given as an option to help the students during an English composition course. The current study took advantage of FHSU's pilot study and used that opportunity to investigate additional variables related to second language acquisition. The current study does not assess the result of the programs used in the pilot study, but rather explores variables such as motivation and learning strategies that are related to English acquisition.

There were 76 participants (36 men and 40 women) from Sias International University sampled in this study. The mean age for participants was 20.77 ( $SD=1.07$ ). Students enrolled in five sections of ENG 101 from fall 2013 and another five sections of ENG 102 from spring 2014 participated in the study. As part of the study, participants completed a battery of surveys including: an ESL placement test (developed by FHSU ESL Office), a demographic survey (self-constructed), the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ; Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1991), the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1998), and a media consumption questionnaire (modified from Kohut, Doherty, Dimock, & Keeter, 2012).

It was predicted that demographic variables (e.g., desire to study abroad, frequency with which English was spoken in the home, interest in learning English)

would be related to ESL placement test scores. However, no significant results related to demographic variables were found. For example, there was no significant difference in scores on the ESL placement test between participants who desired to study abroad, did not desire to study abroad, or might be interested in studying abroad. In addition, the correlation between frequency with which English was spoken in the home and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant. Similarly, the correlation between an individual's interest in learning English and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant. And, there was no significant difference in scores on the ESL placement test between participants who indicated that learning English is beneficial and participants who indicated that learning English is not beneficial.

It was also hypothesized that ESL placement test scores would be related to scores on the MSLQ, SILL, and media consumption surveys. The correlations between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation scores on the ESL placement test were not statistically significant. The correlations between the SILL subscales and scores on the ESL placement test were not statistically significant. The correlation between English media consumption and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant.

Although the correlations run between ESL placement test scores and Demographic variables, motivation scales, Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, and media consumption were found to be insignificant, this information can be beneficial for future research. Future research may use this information to take a more in-depth look at one or more of those variables and their relationship with second language acquisition or other areas of learning. Knowing that these correlations were found to be insignificant also expands the body of knowledge on second language acquisition. This study helps

educators and students to understand different variables that may or may not be related to second language acquisition at the college level.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the Fall of 2000, Fort Hays State University (FHSU) began offering courses in mainland China to 40 students and today there are over 3,000 Chinese students benefiting from FHSU courses in various Chinese partnerships. One of FHSU's partnership universities is Sias International University in Xinzheng China. Sias International University is the first full-time undergraduate university approved by the Degree Committee of the State Council in China to grant both Chinese and American bachelor's degrees. The School of Foreign Language at Sias is an undergraduate degree program of the university. The aim of the school is to develop well-rounded students with morals, discipline, and social skills. It also strives to cultivate multi-skilled talents with a strong understanding of the English language and knowledge of international business and skills. Thus, learning English is important to the success of the student inside the classroom and for future job opportunities (Fort Hays State University, 2013; see also [www.fhsu.edu](http://www.fhsu.edu)).

One challenge to the existing partnership with Sias is related to student performance. Specifically, some students at Sias do not currently demonstrate the desired fluency to speak, read, and write in English. FHSU implemented a pilot program in which various English software programs, such as Rosetta Stone, and Memrise were added to English Composition courses to address English fluency.

Although this is an important issue, the purpose of the current study was not to measure the effectiveness of the software programs on acquisition of English as a second language. Rather, the current researcher seized this opportunity to study other variables of interest related to the topic. Specifically, this study examined the influence of

demographic variables, motivation, strategies for learning language, and media exposure on second language acquisition. Thus, this introduction will review literature related to these areas, as well as the following areas in language acquisition: verbal fluency, grammar, and reading.

### **Demographic Variables: Age, Heredity, and Other Factors**

Researchers have proposed that a sensitive (critical) period exists for language acquisition. A sensitive period means that there is an ideal time during development to learn a language and obtain native-like fluency. If an individual is not exposed to a language during this limited window of time, the resulting skills will be less than desirable (Mayberry & Lock, 2003). Although research varies slightly on the exact age at which the critical period ends, it is clear that early language learning is beneficial. For example, it has been suggested that the sensitive period for first language acquisition (L1) is below age five (Newport, 1991; Senghas & Coppola, 2001). Similarly, the sensitive period for second language acquisition (L2) is ages 6-12 years old or before puberty to reach the same fluency as L1 (Meisel, 1995). McNealy, Mazziotta, and Dapretto (2011) studied 156 participants, ranging from age five to adulthood, using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) while listening to three novel streams of continuous speech. Only the 5-to 10-year-old children displayed significant signal increases for the stream with low statistical regularities, suggesting an age-related decrease in sensitivity to more subtle statistical cues.

Research in the area of language impairment also provides evidence that early language learning is beneficial. Bishop, Berry, and Hardiman (2012) considered whether

rate of learning of novel phonological sequences was impaired when the same items were presented repeatedly. Results showed that regardless of family specific language impairment (SLI) status, adult participants showed a decrease in score from the last trial of their first session to the first trial of the second session. Children maintained their level of performance regardless of whether or not they had SLI. The results indicated that children show a better retention over a delay for new phonological sequences than adults, regardless of overall level of language ability.

In addition to age, research has examined how genes/heredity are involved with language learning. Many researchers have found that genes / heredity are involved with learning a language; although the specific amount of variance explained varies from study to study. For example, Oliver et al. (2004) reported from a study of 7-year-old twins in the United Kingdom, that genes accounted for around two-thirds of the variability in learning. Wainwright, Wright, Luciano, Geffen, and Martin (2005) found heritability accounted for 73% of learning, whereas the environment only accounted for 11%. Heredity plays an important role in learning a second language as well. For example, Vinkhuyzen, Van Der Sluis, Posthuma, and Boomsma (2009) conducted a twin study of second language learning where participants rated their abilities to speak one or more foreign languages in relation to the general population. Results indicated heredity explained an estimated 71% of the variance. Dale, Harlaar, and Plomin (2012) conducted a twin analyses that revealed that 42% of the variance of L2 was due to genetic variance and 33% was due to shared environmental factors within a family. Thus even though the

exact number varies, these studies indicate the importance biology plays in language acquisition.

Finally, researchers have identified other factors that are related to second language acquisition. Ehrman and Oxford (1989) looked at the difference in language learning strategies based on gender, career choice, cognitive style, and aspects of personality. Women were found to use more learning strategies than men and professional trainers used more strategies than other groups. Contextual factors such as learners' self-beliefs and social support may influence the kinds of strategies used by learners. The learning environment was assessed to see if it meets the student's needs and manages emotional responses to individualized language learning. Introversion, intuition, and perception were characteristic of language-learning professionals (Brown, 2009). Findings suggest that the contextual factors such as learners' self-beliefs and social support influence the kinds of strategies that learners employ.

Sociolinguistic variables and variation of feedback supplied to the learner have been shown to affect language learning. Sociolinguistic variation is the study of the way language varies any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context, on the way language is used, and the effects of language on society. Howard (2012) looked at the effect of sociolinguistic variation in second language learning. The study specifically looked at French inter-language to explore different issues such as the individual variation in the use of sociolinguistic variables, the relationship between different sociolinguistic variables within the individual learner's social area, and the long-term impact on naturalistic exposure on the instructed learner's sociolinguistic

development. Their findings showed that when learners used different sociolinguistic variable types, the use of a specific variable was related to another. The variation of less and more explicit feedback was also found to impact second language acquisition. Another study asked participants to complete input-based, task-essential practice with interpreting roles in Latin sentences and then received feedback (Stafford, Bowden, & Sanz, 2012). Groups varied in whether they received less or more explicit feedback in practice. Results suggested that practice and less explicit feedback was sufficient to help improvement and ability to interpret Latin case morphology, but more explicit feedback was necessary to promote improvement in production. These findings mirror earlier work by Krashen (1982, 1985) who stated that explicit instruction can only affect the learning rather than the acquisition of the target language.

## **Motivation**

**General information.** Motivation is the act or process of giving someone a reason for doing something. Intrinsic motivation refers to behaviors that are engaged in for their own sake and extrinsic motivation refers to behaviors that are performed to achieve some externally prized consequence, not out of interest or a personal desire for mastery (Ryan & Deci, 2002; Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006). The primary difference between the two types of motivation is that extrinsic motivation arises from outside of the individual, whereas intrinsic motivation arises from within. Intrinsic motivation can also be described as the desire to engage in tasks that are inherently satisfying (Sheldon & Ryan, 2011). Extrinsic motivation is influenced by external factors or influences on behavior, such as rewards or consequences (Ryan & Deci, 2000). An

example of intrinsic motivation would be a child that reads a book for the enjoyment of reading, and extrinsic motivation would be a child who only reads assigned reading from the teacher to receive the reward of a good grade. Behavioral characteristics that are important to motivation include; persistence, choice of challenge, dependency on adults, and emotion. Persistence is the ability to stay with a task for a reasonably long period of time. A highly motivated person will stay involved for a long period of time, whereas an unmotivated person will give up very easily when not instantly successful. Motivated learners will also choose an activity that is slightly difficult for them but provides an appropriate challenge (Brophy, Webb, & Hancock, 1997; Kohn, 2010).

Much research has been conducted to examine how intrinsic motivation relates to school settings. For example, research has found that students learn more when intrinsically motivated and they also retain that learning better. Intrinsically motivated students are also more involved in their own learning and development. Parents can build on this sense of confidence by guiding their child's motivation, learning, and development. Students with high intrinsic motivation do not need an adult constantly watching and helping with activities. Students who are clearly motivated will have a positive display of emotion because they are satisfied with their work and show more enjoyment in the activity (Brophy et al., 1997).

Extrinsic motivation can be used to increase the frequency of a desired behavior. However, people have to consider the effects of rewards on their self-concept, and their motivation to do that activity in the future (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). Does being paid to read, for example, change a student's idea about why they read? The danger of



reward programs for reading is that students will begin to think they are reading to earn something, not because they find reading to be an enjoyable activity. When the reward programs end, the student may read less than they did before. According to the self-perception theory, rewards can hurt intrinsic motivation (Harackiewicz, 1979). Replacing intrinsic motivation with extrinsic motivation makes people lose interest in the activity they initially enjoyed. This is referred to as the over-justification effect. This effect results when people view their behavior as caused by compelling extrinsic reasons, making them underestimate the extent to which their behavior was caused by intrinsic reasons (Warneken & Tomasello, 2008). However, it has been found that extrinsic motivation can increase learning ability in some cases. An example of this is when McGeown, Norgate, and Warhurst (2012) studied the difference between children's levels of reading skill and intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation. They found that extrinsic motivation was associated with variation in reading skill among children with excellent reading scores. This study indicates that children with higher reading scores were found to have higher external motivation.

Rassuli (2012) evaluated external rewards outside of the school setting when he assessed the impact of external motivators presented in the workplace. He studied workers that were offered an engagement bonus of premium wages as an incentive to work overtime. The study was based on the idea that the bonus would increase worker motivation to agree to work overtime. Results showed that workers' willingness to work overtime increased as incentives/bonuses increased. These results support the idea that

extrinsic reinforcements added to a voluntary action causes extrinsic motivation to be enhanced and the previous motivation to be weakened by extrinsic motivation.

Personality style has also been found to have an effect on internal motivation type. Intrinsic motivation can be broken into different subsets. Carbonneau, Vallerand, and Lafrenière (2012) assessed different types of internal motivation. They presented a tripartite model consisting of internal motivation to know (i.e., engaging in an activity to experience pleasure while learning and trying to understand something new), internal motivation toward accomplishment (i.e., engaging in an activity for the pleasure experienced when attempting task mastery), and internal motivation to experience stimulation (i.e., engaging in an activity for feelings of sensory pleasure). Each type of internal motivation resulted from task, situational, and personality determinants and lead to specific types of cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes. The results revealed that experiencing one type of internal motivation over the others depends in part on personality style. Each type of internal motivation was found to predict specific outcomes (i.e., affective states and behavioral choices).

**Motivation for language acquisition.** Research has found motivation is a factor in learning a second language and there are contributing factors related to motivation for language learning. For example, a study assessing Singaporean university students learning Japanese and French found significant results between motivation, self-related proficiency, and language studied, with motivation significantly interacting with language studied (Wharton, 2000). Kormos, Kiddle, and Csizér (2011) found language-learning motivation consists of goal systems, attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, and future

self-guides. Kormos and Csizér (2008) compared the motivation for learning English as a foreign language in three different populations (i.e., secondary school pupils, university students, and adult language learners) and found the secondary school population showed an interest in English-language cultural products that affected their motivation. Self-efficacy may also be related to motivation. Erler and Macaro (2011) found an important link between young beginner learners' inability to decode French, their sense of self-efficacy with decoding-related tasks, and their desire to continue learning the language beyond their educational classes. They believed that other pressures outside of learning the language weakened the student's motivation in language learning. This decrease in motivation was due to the immense time and effort it took students to learn decoding of new languages.

Research has also found that in certain situations extrinsic motivation is related to intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy is related to intrinsic motivation. Specifically, Wang (2008) explored the relationship between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and second language English achievement. A factor analysis of the results revealed a multidimensional construct for motivation of knowledge, motivation for challenge, internal fulfillment regulation, and external utility regulation. Results indicated that autonomous extrinsic motivation correlated positively with intrinsic motivation and achievement, while controlled extrinsic motivation correlated negatively with them. This means that when extrinsic motivation is related to the individual's needs and independence, it is closely related to intrinsic motivation. However, extrinsic motivation that comes from a controlled source isn't related to intrinsic motivation. Additionally,

Wang, Peng, Huang, Hou, and Wang (2008) researched the relationships between motivation, learning strategies, self-efficacy, attribution, and learning. They found self-efficacy and internal attribution have indirect positive predictable effects on learning results. These results indicate there is a positive relationship between self-efficacy based intrinsic motivation and learning.

### **Media**

The literature review thus far has examined many factors that may impact language learning. The next factor to be discussed is the impact of media exposure on second language acquisition. Research has documented the positive impact that media can have on increasing rates of reading and excitement to read. Harris (2009) looked at the relationship of using television to encourage reading. According to a survey completed by librarians, 82% of children asked for books featured on the television show *Reading Rainbow* (Fisch, 2002; Wood & Duke, 1997). Similar results were found with adults. Toni Morrison had her novel *Song of Solomon* selected as the second offering of the Oprah Book Club and within months a million copies were sold (Gray, 1998). Furthermore when Oprah announced that her book club would be discontinuing, Toni sold over 500,000 additional copies of her novel (Sachs, 2002). These studies show that media can increase book sales which could, in turn, influence reading. Media's influence on reading may also lead to media influencing language learning.

Research has consistently found that exposure to media is related to acculturation and language skills in immigrants. For example, Lee and Tse (1994) looked at immigrant's change their media consumption when they moved across cultural

boundaries and whether media exposure relates to immigrants' acquiring of the social norms. Results showed that media exposure related significantly to immigrants' acculturation of the new social norms. More recently, Mucherah (2008) found that exposure to native media (i.e., media native to the new country) was a reported factor at enhancing the use of the native language for immigrants. Brenneman, Morris, and Israelian (2007) found a link between media exposure, reading, and language. Specifically, they found a positive correlation between a child's English language preference for media and better reading skills in English.

Other factors might also be related to media exposure and language learning. Festinger (1957) suggests that individuals select information that is consistent with their attitudes and beliefs and ignore or avoid information that is discrepant. Klapper (1960) provides the argument that the media serves to reinforce beliefs largely based on the phenomena of selective exposure to information. If people select and avoid media messages as a function of their attitudes, beliefs, or cognitions, then individual variations in this regard should be predictive of media use patterns. An individual's attitudes, beliefs, or cognitions about a culture or language may influence the media messages that they consume in that language. For example, interest in and attention to the Watergate hearing was highest among McGovern supporters, lowest among Nixon supporters, and moderate among undecided citizens (Sweeney & Gruber, 1984). Similarly, 70% of the individuals who listened to Rush Limbaugh were politically conservative, compared to 19% of the individuals who listened to liberal/ moderate radio talk shows.

Gerber, Huber, Doherty, and Dowling (2011) examined the relationship between dispositional personality traits (the Big Five) and the consumption of political information. They found that the Big Five traits are significant predictors of political interest and knowledge, as well as consumption of different types of political media. These studies suggest that people will consume media that is most closely related to their beliefs. If an individual has positive or negative beliefs about a language, then those attitudes will affect their willingness to consume media in that language.

Perse (2001) found that the need for cognition scores were positively associated with greater attention to news reports and with greater tendencies to watch local television news for purposes of utility such as information or gain as opposed to simply passing the time. Eysenck and Naias (1978) found that personality traits influence the type of media that the consumer views. Disposition theory suggests that enjoyment of entertainment is largely a reflection of both viewers' dispositions toward the characters in the presentation, and the outcomes of the characters experience (Zillmann, 2000). These studies suggest that a person's personality and interest will influence what media they view. Studies such as these suggest that characteristics such as motivation to learn a second language might be related to media consumption in that language.

### **English Acquisition**

**English acquisition expectations.** As can be seen from the review of literature thus far, many factors can impact language learning including age, genes, other demographic variables, and motivation. Similar to the numerous factors influencing language learning, scholars frequently divide language proficiency into various skills or

areas. These areas include verbal fluency (speaking), vocabulary / grammar, and reading abilities. In this section, literature related to these areas for learning English as a second language will be reviewed.

Before moving on to these areas of language proficiency, it is interesting to note Chinese high school students sometimes underestimate the difficulty associated with learning English. Chi-Li (2011) gave 121 Chinese high school students a questionnaire to investigate their beliefs about English learning. The questionnaire assessed their beliefs about the nature, difficulty, autonomy, and learning environment in English learning. The results showed that, in general, Chinese high school students underestimate the difficulty in learning English, they expect communicative language teaching approach, demonstrate a high preference for an English- medium environment, and display a high degree of autonomy in English learning.

**Verbal Fluency.** As mentioned previously, the critical period hypothesis says that primary language acquisition must occur during a critical period, which ends at about the age of puberty with the establishment of cerebral lateralization of function. A strong implication of this hypothesis is that the processes involved in any language acquisition that takes place after the age of puberty will be qualitatively different from those involved in first language acquisition. Any language learning occurring after the age of puberty will be slower and less successful than normal first language learning (Aronson & Rieber, 1975; Lenneberg, 1967, 1969; Scovel, 1969).

The sensitive period for learning to speak is from seven months to three years of age (Mayberry & Lock, 2003; Montessori, 2012; Newport, 1991; Senghas & Coppola,

2001). In L1 acquisition, the typical process of language development is as follows. At seven months of age, infants begin to babble and try to imitate speech by putting consonants and vowels together. Around one year of age, children have said their first word and know one to five words well enough to use them correctly in context. By 14 months, they use inflection and make hand gestures to complement their speech. At 16 months, children talk as opposed to just babbling meaningless sounds. They also make many common consonant sounds, like *t*, *d*, *n*, *w*, and *h*. At 18 months, vocabulary has increased to 20 words including names, verbs, and adjectives. They use common phrases and make requests. From 18 to 24 months, children will put two-word phrases together for more novel purposes. At two years of age, they know between 150 and 300 words. They use telegraphic speech which consists of short, two-or three-word sentences and lots of pauses. From two to three years old, children can carry on a simple conversation, and ask simple questions. They can expand phrases from three to six word sentences and develop a vocabulary of 450 words. They can use past tense and plurals while also using pronouns correctly. At four to five years old, children communicate easily and have a vocabulary of about 2,000 words. They can retell a simple story with a beginning, middle, and end while looking at pictures. Most of their grammar, pronunciation, and descriptive words are used correctly. From six to seven, children can describe how two items are the same or different and retell a story. At eight years of age, they have mastered all speech sounds as well as the rate, pitch, and volume of speech. They can use complex and compound sentences correctly and are capable of carrying on a conversation with an adult (Newport, 1991).



There is a variation in verbal fluency between L1 and L2. Because of the variation of learning verbal fluency in L1 and L2, it is important to assess different strategies for language learning and instruction in L2, as previously assessed in L1. Second language instruction programs often ask learners to repeat aloud words spoken by a native speaker. Recent research on retrieval practice has suggested that imitating native pronunciation might be less effective than drill instruction where the learner is required to produce the second language words from memory. Kang, Gollan, and Pashler (2013) conducted an experiment with two conditions. In the first condition, learners viewed pictures of objects and heard their names. After hearing the names, the learner repeated them. Consequently, this was called the imitation condition. The second condition was the retrieval practice condition. In this condition, learners tried to produce the name before hearing it. Retrieval practice produced better comprehension of the second language words, better ability to produce the second language words, and had no loss of pronunciation quality. MacIntyre, Burns, and Jessome (2011) looked at French students ages 12-14 that used immersion in language learning. These students described situations in which they were most willing to communicate and situations in which they were least willing to communicate. Responses revealed that students most frequently discussed communication with teachers and friends in a school context but they also described situations outside the classroom, with extended family or encounters with media. They described major issues as their perceived competence and error correction. Situations in which students are most or least willing to communicate are differentiated by subtle

changes in context that affect the authenticity of communication and needs for independence, competence, and relatedness.

**Vocabulary/Grammar.** Vocabulary is an important aspect of learning a second language. Wessels (2011) looked at the five characteristics of effective vocabulary instruction to demonstrate how vocabulary can be emphasized in the before, during, and after-reading phases of instruction. Vocabulary was explored in depth to show how teachers can use a single strategy throughout the lesson to access student's background knowledge, support students in making critical content connections, and guide students to higher levels of word knowledge. Lawrence (2012) examined the difference between vocabulary-achievement for middle-school students whose parents speak English at home to those whose parents speak another language. Students indicated how much time they spent reading independently during the summer and during the school year. On-average, middle-school students experienced a loss of vocabulary over the summer. Students who spoke a language other than English at home had more pronounced summer setback and a steeper learning curve. These findings showed that low-income students experience summer loss, but suggest in urban schools serving mostly low-income students, home-language may be a stronger predictor of summer loss than socio-economic status or reading amount.

Research has also examined the effects of various programs to improve vocabulary acquisition in second language learners. Lo and Murphy (2010) investigated the vocabulary knowledge and growth across two different language-learning programs in Hong Kong. The programs compared were English immersion programs and regular

English as a second language programs. The immersion students outperformed their regular English counterparts concerning their knowledge of different types of vocabulary at various frequency levels. Immersion students also showed more rapid growth in their vocabulary knowledge, especially for the most frequent 2000 words and academic vocabulary. These results support the idea that immersion can provide a more favorable context for second language learners in learning vocabulary.

**Reading.** The sensitive period for learning to read is from four and a half to five and a half years old (Montessori, 2012). In the process of learning to read, children start out acquiring elementary decoding skills and learn to apply these with greater accuracy and speed. Word recognition becomes increasingly automatic by direct recognition of multi-letter units and whole words (Reitsma, 1983; Ziegler & Goswami, 2005).

Automatic word recognition enables children to devote their mental resources to the meaning of text rather than to recognizing words, allowing them to use reading as a tool to acquire new concepts and information (Perfetti & Marron, 1998; Samules & Flor, 1997). Cognitive and linguistic factors are assumed to have a great impact on reading acquisition. Cognitively, information-processing theories occupy an important position in the study of children's reading development. Information-processing factors, such as effects of visual and linguistic word properties on the selection of words, have been shown to constrain children's word reading and reading comprehension processing (Radach, Kennedy, & Rayner, 2004). Research has also explored the roles of top-down processing and eye-movements in reading (Schuett, Heywood, Kentridge, & Zihl, 2008). It has also been shown that limitations in attention and perception may cause reading

problems (Adams & Snowling, 2001; Purvis & Tannock, 2000). Finally, Baddeley's model of working memory is frequently used when explaining the operations of memory in relation to reading development (Baddeley, 2003).

Grant, Gottardo, and Geva (2011) compared variables related to reading ability in third grade students learning English as a first language L1 and second language L2. The students learning English as a second language came from diverse backgrounds, with different levels of bilingualism in Spanish and English or Portuguese and English before they entered school. Within-group and between-group differences were found. Reading comprehension found differences with receptive vocabulary, decoding, and print exposure in the L1 and L2 groups. These differences were found depending on the L2 students' bilingual language status and language acquisition experiences. The results indicated that students who were learning English as a first language scored higher on reading comprehension as they had fewer outside influences. Additionally, print exposure was highly related to comprehension in the lowest performing L2 groups, suggesting that the L2 groups whom had more print exposure did score higher on reading comprehension.

Learning to read English can be difficult for Hong Kong children who learn English as a second language. A study was conducted that aimed to look at L1 and L2 phonological awareness and oral language proficiency as predictors of English reading among children with Chinese L1 (Yeung & Chan, 2013). Participants were 161 preschool Hong Kong children. They were assessed for English reading, English and Chinese phonological awareness, English oral language skills, and letter naming ability. Results

indicated that both oral language proficiency and phonological awareness measures significantly predicted L2 word reading. L2 phonemic awareness was the best predictor of L2 word reading. Cross-language transfer was shown with L1 phonological awareness at the tone level, predicting L2 reading. There is an important role of phonological awareness at the rime and phoneme levels, and oral language proficiency in the course of L2 reading development in Chinese students.

Previous research also looked at native Spanish speakers learning English and reading comprehension. First grade Hispanic English-learning students receiving a longitudinal English intervention whom were considered the treatment group were compared to another group of students who did not receive the intervention and served as a control. The results showed that on average, treatment students scored significantly better in dual oracy and Spanish literacy than the control students and girls showed a faster rate in dual reading comprehension (Tong, Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Mathes, 2011). Baker, Park, and Baker (2012) investigated whether initial status and growth rates in reading fluency in Spanish and English, significantly predict reading comprehension within languages and across languages in elementary students. They found that there were different patterns of reading growth in Spanish and English across measures of grades. EL in first grade had higher scores of pseudoword reading in Spanish than in English and had a higher rate of growth on Spanish pseudoword reading. In second and third graders, oral reading fluency growth rates were higher in English than in Spanish. A multiple baseline design examined the effects of an intervention that combined a vocabulary folding-in technique and self-graphing procedures on the reading

performance of 3rd grade Spanish-speaking English language learners. Results showed that the combined intervention improved the participants' reading performance as measured by vocabulary sight words, reading fluency, and reading comprehension tasks (Albers & Hoffman, 2012). Basic reading difficulty can be found in phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary, reading fluency and reading comprehension. These aspects of reading can become even more difficult when learning to read a new language.

### **Purpose and Hypotheses**

**Demographic variables and English acquisition.** The purpose <sup>1</sup>of the current study was to examine the influence of demographic variables, motivation, strategies for learning language, and media exposure on second language acquisition. Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses regarding factors impacting second language acquisition were formed. First, it was predicted that demographic variables would be related to English as a Second Language (ESL) placement test scores. For example, those *participants who indicated they had previously studied abroad or desired to study abroad in the United States (US) would show higher scores on the ESL placement test than those individuals who reported no interest in study abroad.* Increased ESL placement test scores for those participants who had previously studied in the US were predicted as performance on both comprehension and production tasks for immersed learners is greater than non-immersed learners in second language proficiency (Linck, Kroll, & Sunderman, 2009). *A positive correlation between frequency with which English was*

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<sup>1</sup> As a reminder, the purpose of the current study was not to measure the effectiveness of the software programs on acquisition of English as a second language. Thus, no hypotheses or results related to this will be discussed.

*spoken in the home and ESL placement scores* was also expected. This hypothesis was formed because previous research found that individuals become more sensitive to phonological details in a second language with increased second language experiences (Trofmlovich, 2008).

**Motivation, language learning strategies, and media.** Additionally, it was hypothesized that ESL placement test scores would be related to scores on the motivation scales, the language learning strategy scales, and media consumption. To begin, it was predicted that motivation would impact ESL placement test scores. Specifically, *a positive correlation was predicted between scores on the intrinsic subscale and scores on the ESL placement test.* Such findings would support previous research indicating that intrinsically motivated students outperform extrinsically motivated students in the classroom (Hayenga & Corpus, 2010). It was also predicted that participants' strategies for learning English would impact ESL placement test scores, as previous research has shown that learning strategies were important in foreign language acquisition (Deniz, 2010). *A positive correlation was predicted between participants' scores on the ESL placement test and their score on each subscale of the language learning strategy scale; remembering effectively, mental processes, missing knowledge, organizing learning, managing emotions, and learn with others.* Finally, *how often participants consumed various forms of media in English was predicted to increase English fluency.* Participants who consumed more media in English were exposed to English more frequently and one might assume they had an interest in the American culture, which may have increased their desire to learn English and consequently increased ESL placement test scores. This

finding would be consistent with Ferle and Lee (2005) who found English broadcast media is a good way to connect to people across various cultural groups.



## METHOD

### **Participants**

There were 76 participants (36 men and 40 women) from Sias International University sampled in this study. The mean age for participants was 20.77 (SD=1.07). When asked their university major, 41% identified as Bachelor of Arts in Global Business English, 22% as Bachelor of Science in Information Networking and Telecommunications, 19% as Bachelor of Business Administration, and 17% as Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership. Additionally, most participants (70%) indicated they spoke two languages fluently, while 27% of participants indicated they spoke one language fluently. A very small percentage of participants (1%) indicated they spoke more than two languages fluently. The majority of the participants (94%) were considered “planned” students (those students on a certain degree plan based on previous academic performance). Of the participants, 11 were not exposed to a software program and were the control group. The experimental condition contained 65 participants, all of whom were exposed to two of the four software programs from FHSU’s pilot study.

### **Materials and Procedure**

There were five sections of ENG 101 from fall 2013 and another five sections of ENG 102 from spring 2014 that participated in the study. As part of the study, participants completed a battery of surveys including: an ESL placement test (developed by FHSU ESL Office), a demographic survey (self-constructed), the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ; Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1991), the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1998), and a

media consumption questionnaire (modified from Kohut, Doherty, Dimock, & Keeter, 2012). All surveys were administered in Chinese. The surveys were written in English and then translated to Chinese by the FHSU ESL Office; this form is considered forward translation. An additional measure to ensure appropriate translation was also taken. Specifically, the surveys were translated again from Chinese back to English by a FHSU faculty member originating from China. This is known as back translation, a process which can reveal errors in meaning or nuances in synonyms selected from the initial translation.

Mr. Justin Nicholes was the FHSU English instructor on site in China for all ENG 101 and 102 courses. As part of the coursework, Mr. Nicholes administered an ESL placement test. The ESL placement test was developed by FHSU ESL Office under the instruction of Mr. Mehran Shahidi and was designed to measure vocabulary/ reading and grammar/ syntax abilities in English as shown in Appendix A. The ESL placement test is routinely given to international students and scores from the post-test at the end of the spring semester were used for the current study. The vocabulary portion was divided into two parts; part one was composed of a sentence with four choices for what the missing word may be. Part two was based on reading comprehension which contained a paragraph that the participant read and then answered multiple choice questions pertaining to the reading. An example of a vocabulary question is, “Together they took a train from Paris \_\_\_\_ Marseills.” The participant was given four multiple choices “of, at, by, and to.” An example of one of the reading comprehension questions is, “What helped

his imagination grow?” and the participant was given four multiple choices “reading, lying in bed, making predictions, or writing books.”

The demographic survey was self-constructed and intended to assess 20 different demographics of the students such as age, gender, desire to travel abroad, and academic major. The questions were developed from demographic factors identified in the literature that have the potential to impact English language learning. Six of the questions utilized 7-point likert scales for the response format, whereas the other questions used a multiple-choice format. See Appendix B for the complete survey.

The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) was designed to measure motivation strategies that students have for learning (Pintrich et al., 1991) and it can be found in Appendix C. The MSLQ has two subscales measuring motivation and learning strategies. The motivation subscale includes the following dimensions: intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientation, task value, control of learning beliefs, self-efficacy for learning and performance, affective component, and test anxiety. An example of the motivation subscale question would be, “I am sure I can do an excellent job on the problems and tasks assigned for this class.” The learning strategies subscale measures these additional dimensions: rehearsal, elaboration, organization, critical thinking, metacognitive self-regulation, time and study environment, effort regulation, peer learning, and help seeking. An example of learning strategies would be, “I prefer class work that is challenging so I can learn new things.” Participants respond to all statements on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 “not at all true” to 7 “very true.” Huang (2008) investigated the scale’s reliability and its correlation with foreign language learning

achievement. The results showed that foreign language learning was similar to other subjects in the school environment and the MSLQ has the ability to be applied to foreign language learning studies. Thus, the scales psychometric properties were appropriate for this study.

The Strategies Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was developed by Oxford and Burry-Stock (1998) and it can be found in Appendix D. The scale measures memory, cognitive, compensating, metacognitive, managing emotions, and social strategies of learning. The scale is based on 50 questions using 5-point likert scales ranging from “never true” to “always true.” The memory subscale measures how learners use memory to link new items to something already known. The cognitive subscale measures to what degree individuals use reconstructing or the process by which associations between new and already known information is strengthened. The compensating subscale measures to what degree learners use the context of the situation while listening and reading to compensate for a knowledge gap. The metacognitive scale measures to what degree learners organize and evaluate their own learning. Managing emotions measures the degree learners identify their own feelings in learning circumstances. Social emotional measures how much the learner works with others to better understand culture and language they are learning. An example of a question from the SILL would be, “I remember a new second language word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.” Demirel (2009) found the psychometric properties of the scale to be good.

The media consumption survey was designed to assess how much media participants consumed in English as compared to their native language and is located in Appendix E. The survey was based off of Kohut et al. (2012) but was modified by the experimenter to fit the characteristics for this study. Participants read a statement about various forms of media and were asked to rate how frequently they consumed each form in English and their native language. There are a total of 19 questions using a 7-point likert scale ranging from 1 “not frequently” to 7 “very frequently.” An example of one of these questions is, “How frequently do you watch the news or news program on TV?” The final question asked participants to rate overall how much media they consumed in English based on the same 7-point likert scale as the rest of the questions.

## RESULTS

### Controlling for influence of FHSU Pilot Project

**FHSU pilot project.** As a reminder, the purpose of this study was not to measure the effectiveness of the software programs on acquisition of English as a second language (the FHSU pilot project). Thus, no hypotheses were formed related to the software programs and performance on the ESL placement test. However, it is important to control for any influence the software programs might have had on the current hypotheses. As a result, an ANOVA was conducted to see if performance on the ESL placement test varied by software programs.

One-way ANOVA results indicated use of the software programs did impact performance on the ESL placement test,  $F(2, 74) = 4.50, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .11, \text{power} = .75$ . Specifically, the post-hoc tests revealed that the control group ( $M = 26.92, SD = 4.58$ ) scored significantly lower than the two experimental conditions; Tell Me More/Rosetta Stone ( $M = 31.09, SD = 5.22$ ) and ESL Wow/Memrise ( $M = 32.13, SD = 4.86$ ). To prevent this significant difference from impacting the interpretation of results for the current hypotheses, each analysis discussed below was divided by condition. In the first analysis, only scores from the control condition were used and in the second analysis, scores from the combined experimental conditions were used.

### Outcome of Demographic Variables and Learning English

**Study abroad.** First, it was predicted that demographic variables would be related to scores on the ESL placement test. Specifically, it was hypothesized that those participants who indicated they had previously studied abroad or desired to study abroad

in the future would show higher scores on the ESL placement test than those individuals who had not studied abroad or were not interested in doing so in the future.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess if scores on the ESL placement test would be impacted by previous study abroad opportunities. For the experimental groups, there was no significant difference in scores on the ESL placement test between participants who indicated they had studied abroad ( $M = 32.99$ ,  $SD = 7.08$ ) and participants who indicated they had not studied abroad ( $M = 31.41$ ,  $SD = 4.91$ ),  $F(1, 58) = 1.77$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .02$ , power = 1.00. For the control group, all participants indicated they had not previously studied abroad and thus additional analyses were not warranted.

Next, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess if scores on the ESL placement test would be impacted by a desire to study abroad in the future. For the experimental groups, there was no significant difference in scores on the ESL placement test between participants who desired to study abroad ( $M = 31.70$ ,  $SD = 5.56$ ), did not desire to study abroad ( $M = 33.43$ ,  $SD = 3.25$ ), or might be interested in studying abroad ( $M = 30.77$ ,  $SD = 4.56$ ),  $F(2, 57) = 0.69$ ,  $p > .05$ . A similar result was found with the control group as there was no significant difference in scores on the ESL placement test between participants who desired to study abroad ( $M = 25.00$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ), did not desire to study abroad ( $M = 26.01$ ,  $SD = 6.08$ ), or might be interested in studying abroad ( $M = 28.00$ ,  $SD = 4.84$ ),  $F(2, 8) = 0.35$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .03$ , power = 1.00.

**Exposure and interest.** Other demographics were predicted to influence scores on the ESL placement test. Specifically, it was hypothesized that individuals would score higher on the ESL placement test: (a) as English was spoken more often in the home, and

(b) as individual interest to learn English increased. It was also predicted that participants who believed learning English was beneficial to them would score higher on the ESL placement test than individuals who did not believe it was beneficial.

A Pearson correlation was first performed to assess the relationship between the frequency with which English was spoken in the home and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between frequency with which English was spoken in the home and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(59) = .12, p > .05$  (one-tailed). Similarly for the control groups, the correlation was also not statistically significant,  $r(9) = -.19, p > .05$  (one-tailed).

Next, a Pearson correlation was performed to assess the relationship between an individual's interest in learning English and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between an individual's interest in learning English and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(58) = .13, p > .05$  (one-tailed). Similarly for the control groups, the correlation was also not statistically significant,  $r(9) = -.34, p > .05$  (one-tailed).

Finally, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess if scores on the ESL placement test would be impacted by the belief that learning English was beneficial. For the experimental groups, there was no significant difference in scores on the ESL placement test between participants who indicated that learning English is beneficial ( $M = 31.67, SD = 4.99$ ) and participants who indicated that learning English was not beneficial ( $M = 25.01, SD = 5.02$ ),  $F(1, 58) = 1.77, p > .05, \eta_p^2 = .29, \text{power} = .26$ . For



the control group, all participants indicated that learning English would be beneficial and thus additional analyses were not warranted.

### **Outcome of Motivation and Learning English**

It was predicted that motivation would impact scores on the ESL placement test. To test this hypothesis, correlations between individuals' scores on the subscales of the MSLQ and scores on the ESL placement test were examined. A Pearson correlation was performed to assess the relationship between intrinsic motivation and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between intrinsic motivation and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(65) = -.13, p > .05$  (two-tailed). The correlation was also not statistically significant for the control,  $r(10) = .14, p > .05$  (two-tailed). A Pearson correlation was also performed to assess the relationship between extrinsic motivation and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between extrinsic motivation and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(63) = -.02, p > .05$  (two-tailed). Similarly for the control groups, the correlation was also not statistically significant,  $r(10) = .32, p > .05$  (two-tailed).

### **Outcome of Strategies for Learning English**

It was also predicted that participants' strategies for learning English would impact scores on the ESL placement test. To test this hypothesis, a Pearson correlation was performed to assess the relationship between each subscale of the SILL and scores on the ESL placement test. The first SILL subscale that was analyzed was *remembering effectively*. A Pearson correlation was performed to evaluate the relationship between

remembering effectively and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between remembering effectively and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(63) = .00, p > .05$  (two-tailed). Similarly for the control groups, the correlation was also not statistically significant,  $r(9) = -.29, p > .05$  (two-tailed). A Pearson correlation was performed to assess the relationship between *mental processes* and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between mental process and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(63) = .04, p > .05$  (two-tailed). Similarly for the control groups, the correlation was also not statistically significant,  $r(9) = -.01, p > .05$  (two-tailed). A Pearson correlation was performed to assess the relationship between *missing knowledge* and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between missing knowledge and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(63) = .12, p > .05$  (two-tailed). The correlation was also not statistically significant for the control group,  $r(9) = .10, p > .05$  (two-tailed). A Pearson correlation was performed to assess the relationship between *organizing learning* and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between organizing learning and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(63) = -.00, p > .05$  (two-tailed). The correlation was also not statistically significant for the control group,  $r(9) = .14, p > .05$  (two-tailed). A Pearson correlation was performed to assess the relationship between *managing emotions* and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between managing emotions and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(63) = .07, p > .05$  (two-

tailed). For the control groups, the correlation was also not statistically significant,  $r(9) = -.21, p > .05$  (two-tailed). A Pearson correlation was performed to assess the relationship between *learn with others* and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between learn with others and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(63) = .01, p > .05$  (two-tailed). Similarly for the control groups, the correlation was also not statistically significant,  $r(9) = -.03, p > .05$  (two-tailed).

### **Outcome of Media and Learning English**

Finally, it was also hypothesized that scores on the ESL placement test would be related to scores on the media consumption survey. Specifically how often participants consumed various forms of media in English was predicted to increase English fluency. A composite score on the media consumption survey was calculated by summing how frequently various forms of media were consumed in English. A Pearson correlation was first performed to assess the relationship between the frequency media was consumed in English and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between English media consumption and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(64) = -.05, p > .05$  (one-tailed). Similarly for the control group, the correlation was also not statistically significant,  $r(9) = .05, p > .05$  (one-tailed).

## DISCUSSION

### **Demographic Variables and Learning English**

The purpose of the current study was to examine the influence of demographic variables, motivation, strategies for learning language, and media exposure on second language acquisition. First, it was predicted that demographic variables would be related to ESL placement test scores. For example, those participants who indicated they had previously studied abroad or desired to study abroad in the United States (US) would show higher scores on the ESL placement test than those individuals who reported no interest in study abroad. A positive correlation between frequency with which English was spoken in the home and ESL placement scores was also expected. However, ESL placement test scores were not significantly related to frequency with which English was spoken in the home or study abroad. These results indicated that there is not a positive correlation between studying abroad and second language acquisition, nor was there a positive correlation between frequency of English spoken in the home and English acquisition. Muñoz and Llanes (2014) investigated the outcome of participants of two different age groups (child vs. adults) learning English in two different contexts (at home vs. study abroad). It was found that child participants abroad experienced the greatest improvement and also spent more time speaking with native speakers than adult participants abroad. The results of this study may suggest that participants of a younger age may utilize the second language while in a study abroad experience which then enables them to acquire more of that language compared to adults experiencing study abroad. These findings relate to the current study's findings by suggesting that the adult

participants in the current study may have not utilized English while experiencing a study abroad compared to the way a child may utilize a second language as demonstrated in Muñoz and Llanes (2014). Tagoilelagi-Leota, McNaughton, MacDonald, and Farry (2005) studied children whom were exposed to two languages in the home. Development in a home language (L1) and in English (L2) was plotted over six months prior to going to school and over the first year at an English speaking school. Before attending school the students develop both languages equally. After one year of school, there were indicators of faster progress in English and a slowing down of progress in L1. These results suggest that there was a greater amount of L2 learning while in school rather than from exposure in the home. Results are congruent with the current study's results indicating that L2 exposure in the home does not relate significantly to overall L2 learning.

### **Motivation and Learning English**

It was predicted that motivation would impact ESL placement test scores. Specifically, a positive correlation was predicted between scores on the intrinsic subscale and scores on the ESL placement test. Results indicated that there was not a positive correlation between scores on the intrinsic subscale and scores on the ESL placement test. Although this correlation was predicted based on findings from previous research, there is research support for the non-significant findings from the current study. Previous research indicated that ELL student's self-efficacy positively and significantly associated with reading comprehension, while intrinsic motivation was not associated with reading comprehension (Proctor, Daley, Louick, Leider, & Gardner, 2014). Based on these

results, it may have been beneficial to also assess self-efficacy in relation to second language acquisition. Assessing self-efficacy may have provided different results than the current study's look at intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

### **Strategies for Learning English**

It was also predicted that participant's strategies for learning English would impact ESL placement test scores. A positive correlation was predicted between the participant's score on the ESL placement test and their score on each subscale of the SILL; remembering effectively, mental processes, missing knowledge, organizing learning, managing emotions, and learn with others. However, results did not find a positive correlation between participants' scores on the SILL and the ESL placement test. These findings were supported by Aarepattamannil (2014) who found that self-reported use of elaboration strategies were not significantly associated with reading literacy among adolescents from India. Previous research suggested that Chinese students underestimate the difficulty of learning English (Tang & Tian, 2015), if they underestimate the difficulty in learning English then they may not be using strategies that would help improve their English fluency. It may be suggested that when students do not foresee a subject area to be difficult they may not search for more learning strategies to aide them in acquiring the subject material.

### **Media and Learning English**

Finally, how often participants consumed various forms of media in English was predicted to increase English fluency. The participants who consumed more media in English were not only exposed to English more but also had an interest in the American

culture which may have increased their desire to learn English and consequently increased ESL placement test scores. Results indicated that there was not a positive increase in English fluency based on media exposure in English. Choi and Clark (2006) assessed college level English ESL students with no significant difference between the group exposed to multimedia and the group not exposed to the multimedia agent. They claim that learning is supported by appropriate instructional methods and not a delivery medium. Participants may have been limited in the media available to consume in English due to government restrictions on internet use (Xu, 2014).

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

Limitations associated with this study include that the researcher did not design the study. The fact that the researcher did not design the study limited the researcher's methods of implementing their specific hypothesis. The relationship to Fort Hays State University's study may have also incorporated limitations to this study. The researcher's inability to be on site of the study could have also caused limitations, as the researcher was not on site to monitor the implementation of the study and data collection process. The study was done internationally which caused limitations in control variables. An international study is more difficult to control for extraneous variables because there are vast extraneous variables to control. The ESL placement test was constructed by FHSU which limited the ability to test validity and reliability. The researcher had agreed with the test constructors to not assess the validity and reliability of the ESL placement test.

Cultural differences between Chinese students and English expectations may have also effected English acquisition. Gu and Schweisfurth (2006) looked at the effect of

culture in Chinese learners. They looked at the challenges Chinese learners face in adapting to the British higher education teaching and learning culture. They found a change in the learners, affected by a range of interrelated personal, cultural, social, psychological and contextual factors. Research on the links between the Chinese cultural context and Chinese learning styles has provided an important basis for understanding the interface between Chinese learners and Western modes of education. There may also be difference in U.S. and Chinese cultural beliefs about learning. Li (2003) examined U.S. and Chinese conceptions of learning with learning-related terms collected from U.S. and Chinese students. The sets of cultural beliefs contained such different notions about learning that there was little overlap. English terms included elaborated conceptions of mental processes, internal learning characteristics, social contexts, and externally existing bodies of knowledge. Chinese terms included personal attitudes, purposes, and action plans for learning. Chinese concepts also emphasized achievement standards of breadth and depth of knowledge, the unity of knowledge and morality, and contributions to society.

### **Implications**

The study helped researchers to understand variables that may or may not be related to second language acquisition. This knowledge is important for students and for educators. Students can use this knowledge to help them assess strategies that they may want to use for second language acquisition. It may also help them understand the influence of how their personal demographic variables, motivation, strategies for learning language, and media exposure may or may not impact their learning a second language.



As a learner it is important to understand how you personally learn and what has or hasn't worked for learners in previous research. Second language learners can judge themselves based off of these results how best they may learn a second language and what strategies they may want to use. This information is also helpful to second language educators.

Second language educators need to know how best to teach their second language learners so knowing variables such as the impact of second language learning on demographic variables, motivation, strategies for learning language, and media exposure may help them in educating their students. Educators have the difficult job of teaching to a variety of students with a variety of learning techniques, any help from previous research on the techniques used to learn specific information such as a second language can be advantages for them.

## **Conclusions**

Overall the study did broaden our knowledge on second language acquisition at the college level. Much research has been done in younger ages for second language learning but not as much research has been assessed for second language learning in college students. There is also little research addressing second language learning on demographic variables, motivation, strategies for learning language, and media exposure at the college level. This research is beneficial in looking at these different variables for this age group. This information may also be advantageous in the education of second language learning and to future research.

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## TABLES

**Table 1***Participant University Major (number and valid %)*

Major	#	Valid%
Bachelor of Business Administration	23	23.5
Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership	19	19.4
Bachelor of Science in Global Business English	38	38.8
Bachelor of Science in Information Networking and Telecommunications	18	18.4

## TABLES

**Table 2***Fluent Languages (number and valid %)*

Language	#	Valid%
Mandarin	97	100
English	16	83.7
Other	4	4.1



## TABLES

**Table 3***English Proficiency exam (number and valid %)*

Exam	#	Valid%
Taken Exam	39	40.2
Didn't Take Exam	58	59.8
Passed Exam	45	73.8
Didn't Pass Exam	16	26.2

## TABLES

**Table 4***Planned and Unplanned students (number and valid %)*

Student status	#	Valid%
Planned Student	91	93.8
Not a Planned Student	6	6.2
Unplanned Student	3	3.3
Not an Unplanned Student	89	96.7

## TABLES

**Table 5***Study Abroad (number and valid %)*

Study Abroad	#	Valid%
Study abroad in the foreign language program in which they are enrolled (yes)	3	3.1
Study abroad in the foreign language program in which they are enrolled (no)	93	96.9
Short-term program (2-8 weeks)	9	8.2
Long-term program (more than 8 weeks)	5	4.5
Desire to study abroad (yes)	55	56.7
Desire to study abroad (no)	12	12.4
Desire to study abroad (maybe)	30	30.9

## Appendix A

### *ESL Placement Test*

ESL Placement Test removed to protect test confidentiality.

## Appendix B

*Demographic Questionnaire*

Directions: Chose the option that describes you best.

1. What is your gender?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
2. How old are you?
  - a. 18
  - b. 19
  - c. 20
  - d. 21
  - e. 22
  - f. 23
  - g. 24
  - h. 25
  - i. Other
3. What is your Ethnicity?
  - a. Han
  - b. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your university major?
  - a. Bachelor of Business Administration
  - b. Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership
  - c. Bachelor of Arts in Global Business English
  - d. Bachelor of Science In Information Networking and Telecommunications
5. How many languages are you fluent in?
  - a. 1
  - b. 2
  - c. 3
  - d. 4
  - e. 5 or more
6. What languages do you speak? Please Check all that apply.
  - a. Mandarin Chinese
  - b. English
  - c. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Have you taken the TOEFL, IELTS, or the HLI English proficiency exams?
  - a. Yes

- b. No
- 8. If you answered yes to # 7 did you pass the exam? If you answered no to #7 continue to # 9.
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 9. On a scale of 1-7 to what degree was English spoken by members in your household growing up?
 

Never    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Frequently
- 10. Are you a planned student?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 11. Are you an unplanned student?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 12. Did you study abroad in the language for the Foreign Language program in which you are enrolled?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 13. If you answered no to #12, please skip to question 14. If you answered yes to #12, was the program ...
  - a. Short-term (2-8 weeks)
  - b. Long-term (more than 8 weeks)?
- 14. Do you desire to study abroad to the U.S. in the future?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Maybe
- 15. On a scale of 1-7 how frequently have you used the English supplementary software Rosetta Stone Totale prior to taking your current English composition class?
 

Not at all    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Very Frequently
- 16. On a scale of 1-7 how frequently have you used the English supplementary software Tell Me More prior to taking your current English composition class?
 

Not at all    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Very Frequently
- 17. On a scale of 1-7 how frequently have you used the English supplementary software Memrise prior to taking your current English composition class?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Frequently

18. On a scale of 1-7 how frequently have you used the English supplementary software Excelsior Wow prior to taking your current English composition class?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Frequently

19. What is your personal interest level in learning English?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Interested

20. Would learning English be beneficial to you in the future? For example in a job or if you desire to travel?

- a. Yes
- b. No

## Appendix C

*Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire*

Please rate the following items based on your behavior in this class. Your rating should be on a 7-point scale where **1= not at all true of me** to **7= very true of me**.

1. I prefer class work that is challenging so I can learn new things.
2. Compared with other students in this class I expect to do well.
3. I am so nervous during a test that I cannot remember facts I have learned.
4. It is important for me to learn what is being taught in this class.
5. I like what I am learning in this class.
6. I'm certain I can understand the ideas taught in this course.
7. I think I will be able to use what I learn in this class in other classes.
8. I expect to do very well in this class.
9. Compared with others in this class, I think I'm a good student.
10. I often choose paper topics I will learn something from even if they require more work.
11. I am sure I can do an excellent job on the problems and tasks assigned for this class.
12. I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take a test.
13. I think I will receive a good grade in this class.
14. Even when I do poorly on a test I try to learn from my mistakes.
15. I think that what I am learning in this class is useful for me to know.
16. My study skills are excellent compared with others in this class.
17. I think that what we are learning in this class is interesting.
18. Compared with other students in this class I think I know a great deal about the subject.
19. I know that I will be able to learn the material for this class.
20. I worry a great deal about tests.
21. Understanding this subject is important to me.
22. When I take a test I think about how poorly I am doing.
23. When I study for a test, I try to put together the information from class and from the book.
24. When I do homework, I try to remember what the teacher said in class so I can answer the questions correctly.
25. I ask myself questions to make sure I know the material I have been studying.
26. It is hard for me to decide what the main ideas are in what I read.
27. When work is hard I either give up or study only the easy parts.
28. When I study I put important ideas into my own words.
29. I always try to understand what the teacher is saying even if it doesn't make sense.
30. When I study for a test I try to remember as many facts as I can.



31. When studying, I copy my notes over to help me remember material.
32. I work on practice exercises and answer end of chapter questions even when I don't have to.
33. Even when study materials are dull and uninteresting, I keep working until I finish.
34. When I study for a test I practice saying the important facts over and over to myself.
35. Before I begin studying I think about the things I will need to do to learn.
36. I use what I have learned from old homework assignments and the textbook to do new assignments.
37. I often find that I have been reading for class but don't know what it is all about.
38. I find that when the teacher is talking I think of other things and don't really listen to what is being said.
39. When I am studying a topic, I try to make everything fit together.
40. When I'm reading I stop once in a while and go over what I have read.
41. When I read materials for this class, I say the words over and over to myself to help me remember.
42. I outline the chapters in my book to help me study.
43. I work hard to get a good grade even when I don't like a class.
44. When reading I try to connect the things I am reading about with what I already know.

## Appendix D

*Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)*

This form of the strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) is for students of a second language (SL). Please read each statement and fill in the bubble of the response (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that tells HOW TRUE THE STATEMENT IS.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. **There are no right or wrong answers** to these statements.

**Part A**

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in the SL.      1    2    3    4  
5
2. I use new SL words in a sentence so I can remember them.      1    2    3    4  
5
3. I connect the sound of a new SL word and an image or picture of a situation in which the word might be used.      1    2    3    4  
5
4. I remember a new SL word by making a mental picture of a Situation in which the word might be used.      1    2    3    4  
5
5. I use rhymes to remember new SL words.      1    2    3    4  
5
6. I use flashcards to remember new SL words.      1    2    3    4  
5
7. I physically act out new SL words.      1    2    3    4  
5

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 8. I review SL lessons often.<br>5  | 1   2   3   4 |
| 9. I remember new SL words or phrases by remembering their<br>5<br>location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign. | 1   2   3   4 |

**Part B**

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 10. I say or write new SL words several times.<br>5   | 1   2   3   4 |
| 11. I try to talk like native SL speakers.<br>5   | 1   2   3   4 |
| 12. I practice the sounds of SL.<br>5   | 1   2   3   4 |
| 13. I use the SL words I know in different ways.<br>5   | 1   2   3   4 |
| 14. I start conversations in the SL.<br>5   | 1   2   3   4 |
| 15. I watch SL language TV shows spoken in the SL or go to<br>5<br>movies spoken in SL.                 | 1   2   3   4 |
| 16. I read for pleasure in the SL.<br>5   | 1   2   3   4 |
| 17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in the SL.<br>5  | 1   2   3   4 |
| 18. I first skim an SL passage (read over the passage quickly)<br>5<br>then go back and read carefully. | 1   2   3   4 |
| 19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new<br>5<br>words in the SL.                | 1   2   3   4 |
| 20. I try to find patterns in the SL.<br>5  | 1   2   3   4 |

21. I find the meaning of an SL word by dividing it into parts  
5 that I understand. 1 2 3 4
22. I try not to translate word for word. 1 2 3 4  
5
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in the SL. 1 2 3 4  
5

**Part C**

24. To understand unfamiliar SL words, I make guesses. 1 2 3 4  
5
25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in the  
5 SL, I use gestures. 1 2 3 4
26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in the SL. 1 2 3 4  
5
27. I read SL without looking up every new word. 1 2 3 4  
5
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in the SL. 1 2 3 4  
5
29. If I can't think of an SL word, I use a word or phrase that  
5 means the same thing. 1 2 3 4

**Part D**

30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my SL. 1 2 3 4  
5
31. I notice my SL mistakes and use that information to help me  
5 do better. 1 2 3 4
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking SL. 1 2 3 4  
5

33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of SL. 1 2 3 4  
5
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study SL. 1 2 3 4  
5
35. I look for people I can talk to in SL. 1 2 3 4  
5
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in SL. 1 2 3 4  
5
37. I have clear goals for improving my SL skills. 1 2 3 4  
5
38. I think about my progress in learning SL. 1 2 3 4  
5

**Part E**

39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using SL. 1 2 3 4  
5
40. I encourage myself to speak SL even when I am afraid of 1 2 3 4  
5  
making a mistake.
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in SL. 1 2 3 4  
5
42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or 1 2 3 4  
5  
using SL.
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning dairy. 1 2 3 4  
5
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning SL. 1 2 3 4  
5

**Part F**

45. If I do not understand something in SL, I ask the other person 1 2 3 4  
5  
to slow down or say it again.

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 46. I ask SL speakers to correct me when I talk.<br>5     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 47. I practice SL with other students.<br>5               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 48. I ask for help from SL speakers.<br>5                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 49. I ask questions in SL.<br>5                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 50. I try to learn about the culture of SL speakers.<br>5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

## Appendix E

*Revised Media Questionnaire*

## Directions:

Indicate if you have performed the following activities in English or in your native language in the past 7 days. Specifically, give an estimate of how frequently you performed each activity on a scale ranging from 1-7, 1 meaning that you didn't perform the activity at all and 7 showing that you performed it frequently.

Not at all      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Very frequently

English/ Native Language

1. How frequently do you read news?	1		
2. How frequently do you read a paper version of the newspaper?	2		
3. How frequently do you read news online on a computer or a tablet?	3		
4. How frequently do you read news online with a cell phone or mobile device?	4		
5. How frequently do you watch the news or news program on TV?	5		
6. How frequently do you listen to the traditional AM or FM radio for and purpose (e.g. music, talk show)?	6		
7. How frequently do you listen to satellite radio for any purpose (e.g., music, talk show)?	7		
8. How frequently do you listen to programs for any purpose (e.g., music, talk show) on electronic devices including computers, MP players and cell phones?	8		
9. How frequently do you read print magazines?	9		
10. How frequently do you read magazines available through on-line means?	10		
11. Not including school or work related books, how frequently do you read for pleasure?	11		
12. How frequently do you play a game on a computer, mobile device or video game console?	12		
13. How frequently do you send an email, text message or other instant message?	13		
14. How frequently do you have a casual conversation with someone?	14		
15. How frequently do you use Facebook or another social networking site?	15		
16. How frequently do you "follow" any organizations or individuals on Twitter or social networking sites?	16		
17. How frequently do you "like" or "favorite post" of any organizations or individuals on Twitter or social networking sites?	17		
18. How frequently do you watch TV shows or movies?	18		

- Thinking about what you watch on TV, listen to on the radio and read in newspapers... Overall, how much, if any, is in a language other than English? 1 meaning none at all, 2 little and 3 indicating a lot.

Never

Frequently

1

2

3

4

5

6

7



## Appendix F

*IRB Approval Letter*

**FORT HAYS STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

*Forward thinking. World ready.*

---

OFFICE OF SCHOLARSHIP AND SPONSORED PROJECTS

DATE: December 6, 2013

TO: Heidi Hines  
FROM: Fort Hays State University IRB

STUDY TITLE: [530463-1] A Pilot Project in Supplementing English Language Instruction  
IRB REFERENCE #: 14-029  
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED  
APPROVAL DATE: December 5, 2013  
EXPIRATION DATE: December 5, 2014  
REVIEW TYPE: Full Committee Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. Fort Hays State University IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Full Committee Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form unless documentation of consent has been waived by the IRB. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document. The IRB-approved consent document must be used.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate renewal forms for this procedure.

If you have any questions, please contact Leslie Paige at 785-628-4349 or [lp Paige@fhsu.edu](mailto:lp Paige@fhsu.edu). Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.